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1. A medical instrument effective to assist in positioning an internal organ during a surgical procedure, comprising:
a body;
a tissue grasping element appended to the body and having at least one tissue penetrating claw selectively movable between an open position and a closed position;
an actuating member mated to the body and effective to move the tissue grasping element between the open and closed positions; and
a flexible member having a portion secured to the body and at least one free end that is selectively fastenable to a support.

2. The medical instrument of claim 1, wherein the tissue grasping element comprises first and second opposed tissue penetrating claws.

3. The medical instrument of claim 2, wherein the actuating member comprises opposed first and second members wherein a force applied to bring the first and second members in contact with each other causes opening of the tissue penetrating claws.

4. The medical instrument of claim 3, wherein the first and second tissue penetrating claws are biased to the closed position.

5. The medical instrument of claim 2, wherein the tissue grasping element forms substantially a circular shape in the closed position.

6. The medical instrument of claim 2, wherein the flexible member is selected from the group consisting of a strap, a band, a tape, and a string.

7. The medical instrument of claim 1, wherein the body is elongate and the device further comprises a removable applicator sleeve slidably disposed on the body and adapted to selectively engage the actuating member.

8. The medical instrument of claim 7, wherein the applicator sleeve is movable between a first, proximal position in which the applicator sleeve is free from contact with the actuating member, and a second, distal position in which the applicator sleeve

is able to engage the actuating member and thereby move the tissue grasping element between the open and closed positions.

9. The medical instrument of claim 8, wherein the tissue grasping element is disposed on the distal end of the body.

5 10. The medical instrument of claim 9, wherein the tissue grasping element comprises first and second opposed tissue penetrating claws.

11. The medical instrument of claim 10, wherein the first and second tissue penetrating claws are biased to the closed position.

12. The medical instrument of claim 11, wherein the actuating member comprises first and second opposed detents.

13. The medical instrument of claim 8, wherein at least a portion of the applicator sleeve defines an inner lumen.

14. The medical instrument of claim 13, wherein the inner lumen is adapted to receive at least a portion of the flexible member.

15 15. The medical instrument of claim 14, wherein the flexible member is selected from the group consisting of a strap, a band, a tape, and a string.

16. The medical instrument of claim 1, wherein the support comprises a handle mated to the free end of the flexible member.

20 17. The medical instrument of claim 16, wherein the actuating member comprises a wire slidably communicating between a portion of the handle and the tissue grasping element.

18. The medical instrument of claim 17, further comprising a lever movably disposed on the handle and attached to the wire, the lever effective to move the wire and thereby move the tissue grasping element between the open and closed positions.

19. The medical instrument of claim 18, wherein the tissue grasping element is biased to the open position.

20. The medical instrument of claim 19, further comprising a latch disposed on the handle and mated to the lever for releasably locking the tissue grasping element in one of the open or closed positions.

5 21. The medical instrument of claim 18, wherein the body is substantially disk-shaped.

22. The medical instrument of claim 21, wherein the body defines an inner lumen.

10 23. The medical instrument of claim 21, wherein the tissue grasping element is fully disposed within the inner lumen of the body in the open position.

24. The medical instrument of claim 1, wherein the body and the flexible member are integral and comprise an elongate, rigid member having a proximal end and a distal end.

15 25. The medical instrument of claim 24, wherein the tissue grasping element is selectively extendable from the distal end of the body.

26. The medical instrument of claim 25, further comprising a lever movably disposed on the body.

20 27. The medical instrument of claim 26, wherein the actuating member is a cable slidably disposed within the body and connected between the tissue grasping element and the lever, such that movement of the lever is effective to move the tissue grasping element between the open and closed positions.

28. The medical instrument of claim 27, wherein the tissue grasping element is substantially disk-shaped and defines a tissue piercing portion.

29. The medical instrument of claim 28, further comprising a gear assembly rotatably mated to the cable and the tissue grasping element for moving the tissue grasping element with respect to the cable.

5 30. The medical instrument of claim 29, further comprising a biasing element mated to the lever effective to bias the tissue grasping element to one of the open or closed positions.

10 31. The medical instrument of claim 29, further comprising a biasing element mated to the tissue grasping element effective to bias the tissue grasping element to one of the open or closed positions.

15 32. A medical instrument effective to assist in positioning an internal organ during a surgical procedure, comprising:
a body;
a tissue grasping element operatively disposed within the body and having at least one tissue penetrating claw selectively movable between a retracted position and an extended, tissue grasping position;

20 a flexible member having a first end and a second end, the first end secured to the body;
a handle mated to the second end of the flexible member;
an actuating member slidably communicating between a portion of the handle and the tissue grasping element effective to move the tissue grasping element between the retracted and extended positions; and
a lever movably disposed on the handle and attached to the actuating member, the lever effective to move the actuating member and thereby move the tissue grasping element between the retracted and extended positions.

25 33. The medical instrument of claim 32, wherein the tissue grasping element is biased to the retracted position.

34. The medical instrument of claim 33, further comprising a latch disposed on the handle and selectively engageable with the lever for releasably locking the tissue grasping element in one of the retracted or extended positions.

5 35. The medical instrument of claim 32, wherein the body is substantially disk-shaped.

36. The medical instrument of claim 32, wherein the body defines an inner lumen.

10 37. A method for positioning a body organ, comprising:

providing a medical instrument having

a body,

15 a tissue grasping element appended to the body and having at least one tissue penetrating claw selectively movable between an open position and a closed position,

an actuating member mated to the body and effective to move the tissue grasping element between the open and closed positions, and

20 a flexible member having a portion secured to the body and at least one free end that is selectively fastenable to a support;

positioning the body in proximity to an internal organ to be repositioned;

manipulating the body so that the tissue grasping element grasps a desired portion of tissue; and

25 applying tension to the flexible member to reposition and secure the body organ.